



FALL 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many greetings from Athens, Greece! I did not have to write any news in recent months, since everybody knows what is going on, Greece being in the headlines constantly due to the severe financial crisis.

We are all doing well and keep lifting up the banner of hope among our people, declaring boldly that the only exit from this crisis is true repentance before God.

We have had a very busy summer with many programs, and an overwhelming beginning of the fall season. We started with the Russian conference at Cosmvision Center in the beginning of September and continue with an endless sequence of programs hosting Armenians, Filipinos, and guests from all over Europe and the USA. A highlight has been the hosting of the regional Upper Room Family Reunion, with coworkers of this blessed partnering ministry from 18 different countries! Upper Room has published discipleship materials in many languages all over the world. In Greece, we have been honored to publish their daily devotional guide for many decades, with wonderful and blessed results. We also were so blessed to host several teams from various churches, serving and expanding their vision for the kingdom of God as they travel all over the biblical country of Greece!

We have concluded the “summer” part of our international ministry, and now we concentrate on the “winter” part, which is full of the challenges we are facing due to the social conflicts, fear and pain evoked by the severe financial crisis in our country.

Below are some short paragraphs from my weekly reports sent during the recent weeks to AMG International. This may give you a good “flavor” of what is going on in Greece and in many other European countries.

Greece Update Sept. 8, 2011

The summer is over. The schools are about to start without having books available for the students... The strikes are a daily phenomenon everywhere. The people are under tremendous pressure. The deficit of Greece is an internal virus which has nothing to do with the banking system but with the overwhelming number of people employed by the government. However, the financial crisis has a domino effect on all paths of life and for sure in all ministry projects...

Greece Update Sept. 14, 2011

The only real news recently is the official announcement of the heavy, new emergency taxes applicable immediately to all owners of real estate in Greece. Since the government won't have money to pay basic expenses within the next two weeks, they need to get fresh cash. The people are overwhelmed and disappointed. Everywhere you go, you see people talking about what is going to happen in the days to come. Unemployment is so high. Driving back home from our little town I picked up a young man who used to come to CVC, participating in our sports programs. Without any hesitation he told me: “I am looking for work...”

We are talking about real people. The requests are endless, and they are going to become more urgent in the weeks to come. This is the time that our ministry carries a special responsibility and burden to bring, in a practical and clear way, the message of hope!



Greece Update Sept. 21, 2011

We do not have any good news to share, since tremendous pressure is being exerted by the European Union on the Greek government, in order to take even harder measures to raise more immediate cash. They have decided to fire about 100,000 employees working in different governmental positions within the next year!!

All these new measures have devastating consequences in people's life. More people everyday are becoming more desperate and disappointed...

We heard about a well-known owner of an advertisement company, who committed suicide today by "diving" from the top floor of his business headquarters because of overwhelming financial challenges.

Greece Update Oct. 6, 2011

We are having a general strike today in Greece and almost everything is shut down, from the airports to all public services and from ground transportation to medical facilities.

The greatest challenge this week was the trial of a believer who has been accused of the crime of proselytism. Damavolitis Emmanuel, an Evangelical Christian and the father of six children from age 30 to 11 years old, was charged with a violation of the Greek anti-proselytizing law. He was found guilty after trial, sentenced to four months in prison and a fine of 840 Euros (which he couldn't pay), and for a moment it seemed there was a chance for him to end up in jail!

The Greek courts are busy controlling religious beliefs... This is why we believe that our crisis is not merely financial, but it is primarily moral and spiritual.

Greece Update Oct. 14, 2011

Uncertainty is the common ground for everybody in Greece these days. The people working in the public service of garbage collection are on strike for several days, so the whole city of Athens and many suburbs look terrible, covered in garbage.

There is a large wave of people who are getting ready to leave Greece in pursuit of a better future in other regions of the planet. Thousands of Greeks have already filed petitions for immigrating to Australia and other countries which are open to immigration.

Greece Update Oct. 20, 2011

There is a huge financial challenge within the European Union, and Greece is just the excuse for government officials who are thinking of implementing some very severe measures. A huge protest is in progress today around the Greek parliament in downtown Athens, concluding two days of general strikes in the private and public sectors. Many people have been injured in local riots taking place earlier this afternoon, and conflicts between leftist protestors and anarchists are in progress as I write these lines.

Greece Oct. 25, 2011

We eagerly anticipate the final decision of the European leaders regarding the future of Greece. European leaders are talking about the "hair cut" of Greek debt, which will create some very heavy austerity measures for the common people of Greece. Unfortunately, we also anticipate many years of hardships and trials in our land and among our beloved people.

In light of the developments mentioned above, please pray on the following **prayer requests**:

- Pray for wisdom for our Greek and European government leaders.
- Pray for sensitivity and strength of our church leadership as we try to respond to daily needs.
- Pray for a spirit of peace among common people so we may not have worsening riots and social conflicts.
- Pray that the financial crisis will not be an obstacle but an opportunity for the advancement of the kingdom of God in Greece and in our region.
- Pray for the coworkers of AMG who feel the same constant pressure as everybody else but have even greater ministry needs to address.
- Pray for the weekly food distribution programs offered by different churches and ministries, as a growing number of people depend on those programs for their daily meals.
- Pray for our heavy ministry schedule: On one hand, the very demanding administrative duties of the overall ministry and, on the other hand, our growing teaching and preaching ministry, which brings such joy to our hearts.
- Thank God for the facilities of CVC which have become a refuge for programs offering hope and help to many.

Family Life

We strongly feel that the Lord has placed us here for a time such as this. We want to encourage God's people and also be used to minister to those who do not know the Lord. We see a growing sensitivity and openness of people towards the message of the Gospel and the growing attendance in our church meetings. Mary has been extremely busy with our ministry at CVC, along with her ministry among the ladies of our local church. Besides that, she is still in charge of our home, providing a warm nest for all of us with her constant smiling face and serving attitude. She is the only member of our family who has not changed at all...

We miss Constantine a lot, but we are glad that he is progressing with his studies at Bethel College. Irini, our daughter, just started her second year at the University of Athens, and it brings such a joy that we still have her staying with us... Jonathan is growing physically and spiritually, loves his basketball games and his school, and gives a strong testimony for the Lord. Grandma Irini has become a special blessing, as she stays most of the time with us, teaching us all eternal lessons through her powerful and vivid example, especially to her seven grandchildren...

We would like to express one more time our sincere gratitude and thanksgiving to all of you who are standing behind our lives and ministry. During these difficult times, we appreciate even more deeply your constant and consistent sacrificial support, prayers, and love. We also are so thankful for all those who have come over to serve alongside us in any program (in spite of what they watch on the news...), or even just to visit with us and to participate in any of our vision educational trips. The presence of each one is always a tremendous encouragement and inspiration, so that we may continue the ministry that God has entrusted to us in this region of the world, till He commands us to move...

With deep love and gratitude,

Fotis & Mary

Fotis, Mary, Constantine, Irini and Jonathan

